

Maidstone Borough Council

Strategic Leadership & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 3 December 2013

Budget Working Group – Budget Savings Workshop Recommendations

Report of: Orla Sweeney, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Budget Working Group held a Budget Savings Workshop following its meeting on 1 October 2013. The Workshop was open to all members of the Council.
- 1.2 The Workshop was facilitated by members of the Budget Working Group and was attended by the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet and the Head of Finance and Resources.
- 1.3 The informal minutes of the workshop and recommendations made are attached at **Appendix A**.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee are recommended to consider the minutes (Appendix A) of the Budget Working Group's Workshop and the recommendations made:
 - a) That Head of Environment and the Public Realm be instructed to investigate the options going forward for the Park and Ride. Evidence should be provided and investigation undertaken of the following:
 - i. Areas where Park and Ride was a success?
 - ii. The location of current sites should be revaluated particularly Sittingbourne Road
 - iii. The feasibility of a Park and Ride model where you pay to park for a £1?
 - iv. What are the alternatives to a Park and Ride service? The principle of Park and ride should be challenged - Is Park and Ride right for Maidstone and what is its actual impact on traffic and congestion?
 - b) That the Head of Commercial & Economic Development investigate the parking arrangements at Mote Park and the possible introduction of variable charges to combat all day commuter parking, the impact of local schools using Mote Park for parking and the cost of enforcement;
 - c) That the Head of Finance and Resources begin looking at the options for Council office accommodation in preparation for the end of the lease on Maidstone House

in 2023. Options should be considered now (in line with decisions on the Gateway and the 2016 1st floor break clause) to enable the correct long-term decisions for the Council. The Budget Working Group recommends that the plausibility of the Council building its own offices be given primary consideration;

- d) That Cabinet be invited to the next meeting of the Strategic Leadership & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a prioritisation exercise of services within each portfolio area. Consideration should be given to both statutory and non-statutory functions; should the Council continue to provide them and could they be commissioned? and
- e) That the business of the Budget Working Group takes place at the full Committee meeting of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee from which it was appointed.

- 2.2 The Committee are recommended to interview Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Resources and Councillor Moss, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services to consider its recommendations in relation to the savings required for the Budget Strategy 2014/15 onwards; agreeing which recommendations to take forward in relation to this.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Budget Working Group was appointed at the start of the 2013-14 Municipal Year from the membership of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for Budget Scrutiny, as defined in its terms of reference. They were:
 - Councillor Nelson-Gracie
 - Councillor D Mortimer
 - Councillor David Pickett
 - Councillor Yates
 - Councillor Mrs Gooch
- 3.2 Following the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 3 September 2013 it was agreed that the business of the Budget Working Group should take place in the Committee setting and include all members of the Committee. Prior to this the Working Group had met outside the meeting.
- 3.3 The Budget Working Group was a recommendation of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 'The Council as a Business' review undertaken during the 2011-12 Municipal Year. It was felt that a cross-party Budget Working Group, appointed from the membership of the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would help improve the Committee's understanding of ongoing budgetary issues and allow the Committee opportunity for greater input in developing the Budget strategy and the Budget

setting process by looking in depth at certain aspects. It was felt that the Working Group would be able help lead the Committee in its understanding of Budget Scrutiny.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against all the Council priority:
 - 'Corporate and Customer Excellence'.
- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider throughout the coming year.